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Before the Appropriations Committee

Good Evening Senator Osten, Representative Walker and members of the Committee, my name is Jacob Degennaro and I am a nurse at Cheshire Correctional Institute. I am proud to have worked for the department of corrections since 2017 where, on a daily basis, I am given the opportunity to provide multi-dimensional, high quality health care to one of our most at-risk populations. I am testifying today to urge the committee to increase the DOC budget by 20 million dollars, so we can provide the population in DOC facilities with the care they deserve and are required to receive.

For the past year, my co-workers and I have put aside the well-being of ourselves and our loved ones at home in order to provide the care needed by our patients to remain healthy and alive. We have braved this ever-changing, relentless threat with our heads held high and our hearts on our sleeves.

Unfortunately, no matter how many long, hard hours we put in, without the proper resources – including appropriate staffing numbers, up-to-date equipment, proper training – our effectiveness and efficiency is significantly limited.

We need the legislature to invest in staffing and resources by increasing the DOC budget so we can deliver quality care based on Community standards. Speaking on a more personal level, as a registered nurse, my duties extend far beyond just the direct patient care aspect of our job. The medical and mental health staff do a lot more than just deliver health or mental health care. The transition from incarceration back out into the world is one of the most difficult times our population will face in their lives.

We need more resources to give us the ability to provide the education, resources, and support that they deserve and need to succeed when they leave. We need to be put in a position to work cohesively with the direction that our criminal justice system is going – not be a hindrance.

After all that we have been through over the past couple of years, showing us just how uncertain the world is, the one constant that continues to persevere has been people. There is no better time than now to make an investment in people. With all of the progression and change to our criminal justice system, now is the time to establish ourselves as true leaders within our country and leaders within our communities. Now is

the time that our actions can show that we are leaders. Progress does not come from following the established status quo; progress comes from leading toward a new path. We are asking that you work with us to find a solution. Thank you for your time.